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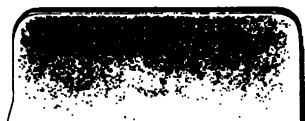
# Tomorrow's Yesterday

A Book of Poems

By

ERNEST BENSHIMOL

(Part) . . . . .



Wenshime







**TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY**





# TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY

A BOOK OF POEMS

BY  
ERNEST BENSHIMOL



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*A little rhyme  
To set the world in harmony  
With itself —  
A little elf  
To cast it spinning through the sea  
Of Time.*

NOV 10 FEB '36



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**TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY**





# TOMORROW'S YESTERDAY

## MARSH DREAMS

The moon was over the silver marsh  
And a flood of light on the grasses lay  
That like a sea from the distant surf  
In shadowy ripples across a bay  
Of unreality in the night  
Beckoned the brooding soul away.

This is a story of self and self,  
With trial and judgment and love of life;  
No death too swift to eternal rest,  
The depth that fathoms the end of strife,  
When soul hath unto the soul confessed.

I

I was alone in the wildwood and the fen,  
I was the child of the salt marsh and the tide,  
Grown so, nor born to the deal — nor death was mine  
Deep in the soft breast, deep in the silencing arms  
Of sand. I care not that your carrion eyed  
Me so, your stalwart keepers of the law,  
I am no beast to strike with beak or claw,  
Not I the reed-toothed viper of the glen  
To fang you low yet nearer to your heart  
Than whip of steel: my passing heeds, not harms,  
Your own. Begone, and let me so depart  
Like to the foam white whispering in the brine.

If I but lie, if I but hold the thread  
That twists across its own sad path and leaves  
No grain of truth to stand among the sheaves  
Of imaging,  
And if I sing

Like some poor madman that I seem, of life  
Deep drawn and shadowed, then there is no wife  
Of mine that sleeps among the murdered dead.

## II

Love you the mist-swept moor  
And the dreaming sea?  
Love you the pale moonlight  
And the stars that linger  
Like a last note that whispers at the finger,  
Love you the desolate solitude of life?  
Then you love me.

Have I said desolate, night,  
When a god I am grown with the gust?  
Oh, drown the lie at my lips  
And the sea will I take to my breast'  
And the mist for a shroud!  
I have loved thee and scorned thee together,  
I have withered the wave at its crest,  
I have banished the moon with a cloud,  
When I loved I was strong with thy strength,  
In my scorn I was poorer than dust.

### III

If you convict or grant me withering pain  
Of life, you are but judges of the slain,  
Not me, I know myself. You cannot find  
One judgment other, for the shifting mind  
Is door and threshold to the soul. A glance  
Of love makes glade of desert circumstance,  
A kiss turns silver moonlight into wine,  
A sin is gift of heaven flung to hell,  
That reels and slinks and feints and will not tell;  
Judge now if that be mine!

And we are followers of the day, not night,  
Not night beneath whose awesome breast I pitch  
My tent; between whose firefly expanse  
And death lives but the firefly. I knew  
The wild cloud and the rain; I felt the switch  
Of summer torrent on my cheek; I smote  
A kiss into life and still it would not float  
Far from the lips that banished it to flight.  
Oh, thought of life is dross of life and all

Dies like a senseless flower in the dew;  
I cannot rise so high I shall not fall  
Nor dream to climb eternity with a glance.

#### IV

I will breathe me a scarlet fire into the dust,  
I will strew a measure of pearls upon the flame  
And let the smoke rise wreathing to the stars!  
Oh, burn thy time and neither wait nor trust  
If thou hast taken life and wilt no blame,  
Take thou thine own and leave no coward trace  
To come when thou art gone and haunt the place.

He was a man of strength, to cast the stone  
Pebblewise out above the surf until  
The eye was lost upon the wave. Alone  
Befriended of the cataract of men  
Who seek to balance wisdom on the tip  
Of the seagull's wing or splurge it from the pen  
He did not ponder with the fool, nor slip  
Into the calyx of the snow-white death.

He saw the torrent rushing to the main,  
He saw the sun that drew it into rain,  
The wind that flung it as a kiss is flung,  
The earth that held it deep its veins among,  
And laughed, for to the bosom whence it sprung  
Turned it forever back again.

V

Lamp of the dark night,  
Lamp of love,  
In her eyes I saw the gleaming,  
Moon of the whippoorwill,  
Moon of the sea,  
In my realm of far above  
On thy face is dreaming  
Smile to comfort me?

Leave thy waters, leave thy forests,  
Let the vision of thy face  
Dance among the little planets  
In the loneliness of space.

In my soul I wish, I want thee,  
All the majesty and peace,  
Let my pain that cannot haunt thee  
Fall asunder, writhe and cease.

## VI

He was the cunning sort, that gathered men  
To feed his intellect upon, in den  
Of feathery silk, a spider-weaver, yet  
Perverse and hideous to his kind. Forget  
The haggard, beaten thing I am and see  
The parchment of forbidden years with me.  
I am so far from Time I know not whence  
Dancing the flight of perfidy I came:  
I nourish soul and body with a flame  
And deem it recompense.

We walked the melody of space together,  
We drew a life from death and bade it tether  
Vein to the vein of dust, and voice and pulse  
To make the living still, the dead convulse,  
And when experiment demanded pain



We laughed and characterized the house as vain,  
Draining desire, lest the flesh commit  
The soul to death's interminable length,  
And we, the strong men prostitute our strength  
For glance of reeling wit.

## VII

Oh, the house of my soul is a house of clay  
And the site is a shifting sand,  
Tomorrow the tide may come and all,  
Tomorrow, forever, my house may fall,  
But the sun is warm at the door today  
And I live as long as my house shall stand.  
Thrice did I pass my window love,  
And thrice did I see thee smile,  
For the wind was sweet  
And the soul was mad  
And the trees in a rhythmic sway the while  
Bade the disconsolate heart to beat,  
So I rose from the pansy bed at thy feet  
And leaned on thy breast and was glad.

## VIII

Oh, he left me his home and his garden and thee,  
And he left, at his gate, with a laugh;  
As yonder marsh hen mocks at the sea  
With a swoop and a shiver of ribaldry,  
He mocked as he killed what he gave to me  
And I swooned as he flung me the lifeless half.

Oh, gather thy strength and lash thy steed  
For the quarry is over the mountains gone  
And call the countryside as you go  
For the hand of a friend is the heart of a foe,  
Nor tell of remorse till tomorrow nor heed  
The nauseate madness, and hasten on.

## IX

Unleash the hounds of bitterness and regret,  
Fierce to the scented trail of nostril, let  
The blood-sown wind sweep them upon me, blow  
The eager breath and fangs as white as snow  
Here close to my throat, the burning eyes

Reflecting death in desire. Let me rise  
Unto the moon and sever will from truth.  
In swiftness they unto the endless chase  
As summer clouds that whisper into space  
And are gone. Then call it truth?

I wish the moon at morn, the sun at eve,  
I wish the terror of the night to slay  
Itself and be its counterpart for the day,  
Laughing forever, and the hate to weave  
Its hissing strands into the garland love,  
The last to fascinate, and twine above  
My temples; Time dream to decay.

## X

Had'st thou but waited when the tide was flood,  
There in the deep white offering of the moon,  
Had'st thou not flung a spray across the boat  
And drowned the passage of our souls too soon,  
There were no wanton stirring in the blood,  
Nor gleam of hatred on the sea afloat.

Reality is centered in the past,  
Tonight is dreaming what the day has done;  
Thy pride was like a bat above the mast,  
Unbanishable, evil, as the sun  
That lurks in the high heavens when the land is parched,  
Yet when I smote 'twas not on thee that fell  
The judgment scorned of paradise, that marched  
In a chain of bright red lightning o'er thy brow,  
'Twas here upon this breast that wanders now  
The long, interminable path to hell.

## THE PASSING OF A SHADOW

I know a nook in utmost solitude,  
Covered with moss; beneath a silver rock  
Flows forth the crystal silence of a spring.  
There in the sorrow of the eve I steal,  
Bathed in the moonlight; and the world, asleep,  
Knows not nor wonders. There is an art forgotten,  
Mystic, I breathe the spirit of the earth.

"Thou art thyself, yet of the whole a part,  
Life were as nothing if thou wert not here,  
Bearing like column through the turbid night,  
Sturdy, the structure of Humanity."

Hours and hours, or if time be long,  
Ages and ages I have waited there,  
Knowing the voice would come again, and now:

“Men, in the great world dwelling, myriads; men  
Rounding the whole into a mighty mass  
And shapeful, over the surface of the earth;  
Tillers of fertile plains, of swaying leas;  
Herdsmen where stern-eyed mountains frown upon  
The golden bend of the seashore! Everywhere  
Incarnate soul, innumerable lives,  
Incarnate soul, yet all no more than one.

Ye are interpreters of thy mother, child,  
Formed but to sing with the sea, and with the wind  
To run and tussle, shriek and laugh and be still:

As sun loves planet, so ye love, so bless,  
Then pass to everlasting destiny.

But play with thy delicate fingers on the reed,  
Then cast the reed away: the sound is gone,  
The music lingers yet — so lingers life.”

And then the ghostliness of the screech-owl breaks  
The ecstasy of that unknown, lipless cry,  
With curious quavering, trembling through the dark.  
But as the dawn awakens, then, at last,  
Before the splendor of a day of hope:

“Oh thou, with mind too small to understand,  
Living through ages helpless and alone,  
Take to thy breast the love that is not flown,  
Mankind, thou art incomparably grand.

## MORNING AND EVEN

Morning is dust and even is ash,  
Only the day is the fire between,  
Only the white waves sweeping low,  
Only the eddy winds that blow  
Under the sunlight of heaven, are true,  
And the love that burns at my heart, and you.

Springtime is faithless and winter responds  
As soulless stone to the infant touch,  
Give me the summer and drown the rest  
As a dross that only supports the best,  
And summer wine or a winter's night  
And a summer's glow in the anthracite.

Birth is a passion and death is a pain:  
I wonder that seekers of wisdom go



To the entrance and exit, and borrow strife  
When they dwell in the very house of life;  
When the wisdom of summer and love and day  
Is theirs, why will they throw it away?

## BEFORE THE ORACLE

Intemperance shall not quarrel with the will  
But give it sway till rich be riper yet,  
For who would draw the clusters from the vine  
Until they yearned to sparkle into wine,  
To dance among the veins and sing, "Forget."

The plain shall be the solace of the hill  
For him who climbs, but on the towering shelf  
He must not turn to contemplate the slope,  
He must not ask the wind to grant him hope  
Nor waste his labor pitying himself.

The world will lift the strong and crush the weak,  
The road of life is cluttered all its length  
With stoneless graves and tombs unwrit for shame,  
Nor shalt thou cry, "I stumbled as I came,"  
For in the frailest will is mightiest strength.

The dark will not inspire them that seek  
The day is but the masking of the eyes,  
Tonight depart, tomorrow is thy choice,  
Ask thou from Time the golden gift: *a voice*  
That fades into the sunken vale and dies.

## CHAOS

The truth is master of the lie,  
The fool is lost, the man is shaken,  
A breath of wind has crossed the sky  
To flame and burn, and merry waken  
Light is the deep lake and the stars,  
Or draw the pulsate heart of earth  
Closer and closer.

The night must wane into the birth  
Of dawn, and death give way to dreaming,  
Thence into life, for dancing mirth  
That finds no rest in sigh or seeming  
Strikes with a hissing bolt and mars  
The dream of the followers of dust  
Deeper and deeper.

Then rise and live, for rise ye must,  
Rise and rejoice for Time is driven  
Back to the kingdom of dewy lust,  
Death to the keeping of Death is given,  
And dark new flung from the breast of days  
Shatters to bits like an earthen vase,  
Broken forever.

## AMONG THIEVES

Open, open, ere the sunset slink  
Below the marshes, open unto me;  
Open, open, ere the nighthawk drink  
One silent draught from out the brackish pool,  
Ere mist in shrouding horror risen from the sea  
Envelop, open, open to the fool!

Hearken, hearken, hearken to the pledge  
In hollow echo sounding o'er the waste:  
Hearken, hearken; from each rugged ledge  
That sloping down slips out into the main  
It calls: nor wilder than my heart in trembling haste  
Beats out the reeling vision of my brain.

Honor, honor, was it thus before  
To slay the best ye sought the strongest out?

Are we yet dreamers of the dark  
Who cannot know,  
Or shall we rise with all a hidden might  
And strike the mask from off our eyes!

## ANTON

Anton, sprung of the wolf-hound,  
Would a'woeing go,  
Fair or foul to win or slay,  
Fleeting love and fly away,  
Bore his dagger on departing  
But I took a bow.

Anton, sprung of the wolf-hound,  
Slunk beyond the stream,  
Like a skulking beast he crept  
Where the forest lily slept,  
Bent above her half uncertain,  
Would not break her dream.

Anton, sprung of the wolf-hound,  
Beat upon his brow,



Stood a moment sad and still,  
Humbled passion to his will,  
Turned and fled into the forest,  
Faithful to his vow.

Anton, sprung of the wolf-hound,  
Does not know the rest;  
Did not see her as she woke,  
Did not hear the name she spoke,  
Dreaming? Nay! there lies adreaming  
Arrow in her breast.

## SANCTITY

Evergreens and snow,  
Calm and a forest solitude.  
The hidden brooklets flow  
Under the shielding ice, and strange  
Pool witches softly blow  
Through dark weeds swaying to and fro,  
In restless change.

Place thy lips to mine,  
Here in the wilderness of God,  
That like a golden wine  
Swift may the hidden current bear  
The fleeting heart's design:  
Deep under snowwhite brows divine  
His presence there.

## GOLD

Gold, gold, that giveth everything,  
A little grain within the eye a-glistening,  
To set the blood aglow the ear a-listening,  
Gold, gold that giveth everything.

Not as the wine to make men dance and sing,  
To tread the earth as cloud on misty wing,  
But in the helpless heart alone  
To make it grand or barren as thine own,  
Gold, gold that giveth everything.

Not as the filmy soul to make men pray for,  
In weary pilgrimage to search the day for,  
Thine is a little strand the whole world compassing,  
A little rainbow strand to which they cling,  
And when they have thee, lo, thy grace is flown,  
Gold, gold that giveth everything.

## THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

Youth dreams and age regrets,  
Youth's dream is of a day  
Unknown and of a hidden reckoning;  
Youth dreams and age regrets,  
And trembling age regrets  
But of the past and lost youth beckoning.

Youth gazes forward, age behind,  
Youth sees the rising of the golden sun  
Youth sees the day in all its splendor light;  
Youth gazes forward, age behind,  
And trembling age behind  
As crimson sunset whispers of the night.

Youth fears, but age is strong,  
Youth's fear is of a Time  
That taketh all and giveth naught in stead;  
Youth fears, but age is strong,  
*Yea, trembling age is strong*  
*And laughs* — though on the morrow it be dead.

## DRAGON

I fear him where the long grass waves,  
I fear him in the limpid, silent pool;  
Where deep the sensuous shadows of the glen  
Enveil me, there the form I know  
    Uprises at my feet.

Dull eyes that fascinate and greet,  
A saffron throat whereon the sun may glow  
In vain, but for the life pulse now and then.  
I fear him, hear him, yet the fool  
    Takes ever what he craves.

## THE ETERNAL

1

The long day comes  
After the dawn,  
And the murmur of drums  
Rolling and beating, hushed and repeating.

2

The white mist steals  
Over the land  
And a dark vulture wheels  
High in the graven clouds like a craven.

3

The death guns boom  
Into the light  
With a fiery doom  
Belched from each swelling throat and repelling.

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## 4

Thou, it is Thou  
Come with the day,  
Let a kiss on my brow  
Still the discerning life and the burning.

## 5

Take Thou the pain  
Out of mine eyes  
And the vision of slain  
Held in each greening flash and careening.



## CONFESSION OF HOPE

A stirring in my veins,  
The wind in the poplar trees,  
A whisper on my brow:  
As quivering prayer the thunderbolt restrains.  
As shore is impotent to the seas  
Life sweeps me onward now.

My cast is with the breath  
Of multitudes; with the waves  
My hope is; with the whole,  
With all this little world of worlds: who saith,  
"Seek him and him alone who saves  
Himself," he hath no soul.

And if I pledge this clay  
Unto the eternal night,

And if I wish for rest,  
Still is the burning of the summer's day  
To claim its mockery of light  
And me? And is it best?

Up through the shadow loft  
Of murmuring pines and tall,  
Unto the stars my prayer  
Shall go, and though the winged cry be soft  
And unto earth again it fall  
Must it not find Thee there?

## ATONEMENT

I fear the quiet treachery of things,  
I steal away from over-golden day  
And in some somber cavern hide myself,  
Time moves, day goes, not I  
I cannot die.

I watch the panther and the fluttering wings  
Of some wild-throated, pinioned bird of prey,  
I shrink at death, draw back, and hide myself,  
Like flows and ebbs, not I  
I cannot die.

God gave the enormous harmony of light,  
Yet what is God and what am I to see  
Aught else but that I list and flee,  
Baring my breast and shrieking in the flight.  
Dead, dead, he lies, not I  
I will not die.

## WHAT IS THINE ANSWER?

This is the land where the shadows move,  
Stealthily, softly, coming and going,  
This is the land where the cymbals crash,  
The quivering drums and the tramp of feet,  
The voice of thunder and serpent lash,  
Where all things opposite stumble and meet  
And steel springs up from the early sowing,  
Terror and love.

Summer is lost and the fields are white,  
Life from the heather and plain is leading  
All that remains of her pillaged fold,  
Back from the frozen brook and the stealth  
Of the white-armed lover of death, the cold,  
The scorner that mocks at her hoarded wealth,

The wolf that comes when her breast is bleeding,  
Out of the night.

This is the land of the glistening throne,  
Gifted with life, and reviler of living,  
This is the temple of sunken hope,  
The candle-hung garden of dreamless sleep  
Where blind and visioned together grope,  
Where night-blown shadows their vigils keep  
Over the tomb of recalcitrant giving,  
Graven in stone.

The white arm droops from the golden lute,  
The strings re-echo the burst of playing,  
A silence hangs on the ruddy lips  
Where dies the fountain of song at its source,  
But far through a shadowy vale there slips  
A river of pain in a turbulent course,  
Its waters red with the wine of slaying,  
Writhing and mute.

Perhaps if the dawn shall come again,  
Or night bind up her sable tresses,  
Closing her eyes, and faint away,  
Blown from the morning as dreams are blown,  
Flinging her heritage to the day  
Nor life remember the visions flown  
And blush to a crimson with new caresses,  
Has it been vain?

## SPRING

Bright robes and brightly flowing,  
Fair tresses, violet eyes,  
Soft dimples, coming, going  
Like wanton butterflies!

Who cares that time is fleeting,  
Who weeps that all must fade;  
When mad the heart is beating  
Who loves and is afraid?

Come closer, closer, tell me  
The secret of thy call;  
Down to thy lips compel me  
One moment, that is all.

## DISDAIN

Love is a mistress of the wine of night,  
For in the breeze no passion lives, the spray  
That flings a million harmonies to the wave  
Is free.

And love is drowsy, sensuous, of the clay,  
The harbinger of birth,  
A listlessness, a lesion of the sense,  
A dream hallucination, to deprave  
Affinity of soul and earth.

High in a flurry of golden fleece  
A wing dips out of the endless blue,  
And quivering down the morning sky,  
Loud and sweet and swift and true,  
I the courier of caprice  
Hark to the consonance of a cry:  
If love he scorned of beauty, love must die!



## DREAM AND LOVE

Tomorrow was the palace where I dwelt,  
Tomorrow was the temple of my dreams,  
Till I met you.

I knew no morn of wakening but I felt  
The fancied murmur of far distant streams  
That fell into the blue.

The spring spoke myriad tongues of coming life,  
Each summer came and fled into the past  
With all the rest.

Each autumn, weary of the unequal strife,  
Hid her bright features in the winter's blast.  
Said I, "Tomorrow's best."

But when I saw you smile, and felt your warm  
Sweet lips steal closer unto mine, away

The vision sped.  
You banished dreams in one great, withering storm  
Of truth: This is Tomorrow's Yesterday,  
Awake ere you be dead.

## FOAM OF DEEP AND CLOUD OF SKY

Foam of deep and cloud of sky,  
Lovely, sea-blown butterfly,  
Soft outspread and floating far  
Down the whisper of a blast,  
Flash of moons and murky things  
Fainting on thy velvet wings.  
Yet I tremble lest it be  
Our dear love that's blown to sea, Sweetheart.

## WOMAN

Wake softly, softly  
As the rose unfoldeth,  
Pale red bud and perfume breathing,  
Wake softly, softly;  
Earth no longer holdeth  
In her cup of emerald, wreathing  
Night, wake, awake.

Rise gently, gently,  
O'er thy stirring bosom  
Velvet lies the sunlight golden,  
Rise gently, gently,  
Blushing like a blossom  
By the virgin morn beholden,  
Gently rise, arise.

Sing lightly, lightly  
In the day's devotion,  
Free thy hair from binding sorrow,  
Sing lightly, lightly;  
With a fearless motion  
Fling it far into the morrow,  
Lightly sing, sing.

Love, maiden, maiden,  
Life is like a flower,  
Let thine heart untutored teach thee;  
Love, maiden, maiden,  
In thy golden hour  
And no sullied lips shall reach thee,  
Maiden, love love.

Prate, nodding, nodding,  
In the day's declining  
Life must wear a dark complexion,  
Prate, nodding, nodding;  
In the shadows twining

Present speech is past reflection;  
Nodding, prate, prate.

Sleep ever, ever,  
Far thy brand is burning  
O'er the stream of darkest flowing,  
Sleep, ever, ever;  
To the night returning,  
Painless, dreamless is thy going;  
Sleep, forever sleep.

## IN THE WILDERNESS

Within thy cheek the faintest rose reborn:  
Perhaps we shall divide the night and thine  
Be one part and the other mine, or call  
Across the wasteland where the torrents fall  
In foaming resonance o'er the dark incline.

My part thy trust, my trust thy bending low  
To measure evening as the waters go  
Dreaming into the snowwhite breast of morn;  
Thy part to sleep, my part to watch thee so!

## REDEMPTION

I came, last night, so close to death,  
That, rising to the last request  
I forced his jaws apart and gazed,  
Twixt fang and fang, twixt opiate breath  
And sleep, into the rose-pink throat.  
"I sail the far ways of the sea,"  
I cried, and swooned upon his breast.

The fancied hours whirled about  
Like sunlight dancing in the wine  
Till soon, with senses more amazed  
Than true, the spirit wandered out  
Into the past. I heard the note  
Of whippoorwill in the apple tree  
And woke to find your hand in mine.



## I CANNOT HIDE YOU

I cannot hide you in my heart  
Because my eyes disclose  
Through distant gazing, or a sudden start  
Of light, yourself: Away my secret goes!

I cannot screen you in a mind  
That dreams the days, between  
Our meeting, dreams, and seeks in vain to find  
Repose therein, and tears away the screen.

I come before the drowsy moon  
Awakes in the purple sky.  
And we shall know the eternal secret soon  
Of dusk and love and summer, — you and I.

Thus I can hide you, in my arms,  
Thus witch the pain away  
Till dawn comes stealing in across the farms  
And life rejoices in a golden day.

## TURN TO MY ARMS

Turn to the east, and turn to the west,  
Turn to the south and the north, and then  
Smiling at sorrow and seeking afar,  
Turn to my arms again.

The gleam in your eyes is the beacon of fame.  
That burns to an endless goal  
From mountain to mountain across the years  
Till desire dies in a valley of tears,  
Till the red fades out of the beacon flame  
And love fades out of the soul.

Rustle of dead leaves, groan of bough  
Tossing to no avail  
Under the turquoise winter sky  
Jewelled and distant and cold and high.

Your strength would follow the tempest now  
And rustle dead things and fail.

Turn to the wisdom of other days,  
Question the seekers that wandered in vain,  
Think of the love you will find at my heart  
And turn to my arms again.

## I SENT HER FORTH

I sent her forth,  
For men spurn most the things they love the best,  
And, blinding vision to her higher worth,  
I cast her out to battle with the rest  
That snarl and surge around law's prudent door.  
She comes no more.

She cannot win.  
No soul of flesh won any battle yet,  
That blustered out to tournament with sin.  
Always they come and plead that we forget.  
With lowered eyes and cheeks that flame and burn  
She will return.

Mine is the shame.  
For I have lost the blessing of a heart

That beat for me, that I might hold the name  
Of master — from some distant dream I start  
And in the darkness struggle to define  
Two lips at mine.

## UNBIND THY HAIR

Unfold the beauty of a whispering night,  
Sweep magically over me again  
The restless sable robe that with a flight  
Of stars floods all my soul. Oh, let me wake,  
Casting into the torrent of the rain  
The dreams I dream, forever, and partake,  
Of love long lost, long hidden under pain.

Oh drench me in a shower of the dark  
And drown me in a whirlpool of despair,  
But save me from the relentless hours that mark  
The grains of sand swift slipping from the cup.  
When all that quivers in the cup is care,  
Oh fill the olden, golden goblet up  
With misty night, mine own — unbind thy hair!

## GOOD BYE

Whisper thy secret, love,  
Time will not stay,  
Hold me yet closer, love,  
Just for today.

Long will thy paradise  
Fade in dispair,  
Founded on structure, love  
Frailer than air.

Vast is the ocean, love,  
Silent and blue,  
Vast thine emotion, love,  
Deeper and true.



Find me tomorrow, love,  
Dead on the plain,  
Broken with sorrow, love,  
Striven in vain.

Stars and a wilderness,  
Light that has flown,  
Life has forgotten, love,  
We are alone.

## THE LAST MORNING

I seat myself upon a crystal throne,  
I swathe my temples in a golden band  
And smile as through the arras, softly blown,  
Sweeps the wide beauty of the sunlit land.

Oh God, why hast Thou made the world so sweet;  
Oh barren heart what hast thou left to give,  
That like the poppy blushing in the wheat  
Thou findest joy in loneliness to live?

Long have I sought as doth a feeble spark  
Borne on the night wind cast its light of pain;  
I will no longer juggle with the dark,  
Soul of my soul I come to thee again!

## REGRET

I never knew the summer till it passed,  
I never knew the sunlight till it fled,  
I never knew the day but with the last  
Bright star of eve to comfort me instead.

Oft when the tide stood hesitant and still  
And when I laughed and dreamed it was mine own  
It drew its waters to a sterner will  
And left me wondering on the beach alone.

Now thou art gone the veil is flung apart,  
Now thou art gone! but in my soul there lies  
The wind of yesterday, close to my heart  
Low whispering, and the dark sea of thine eyes.

## CRY

Thou wert so fair that night I thought not death  
But sleep possessed thee; moonbeams played as breath  
Over thy lips that wronged love fancied red:  
Then closer, closer to my heart I pressed thee,  
Scornful of life that marked thy spirit dead.

They say I crept like craven from the room  
And ran wild-shrieking through the night, as doom  
Swept low the feeble structures of a mind:  
But in my soul I heard thine accents speaking,  
Speaking like dead rose to the autumn wind.

## SCARLET WIFE

How canst thou breathe so sweet a sleep  
The while,  
How can thy cheeks glow with a tender red,  
Thy breast so even rise and fall  
When wild my heart is into swiftness fled,  
My temples throbbing to the trumpet call  
Of madness knocking loudly at my head:  
How canst thou breathe so sweet a sleep  
And smile?

## CONSOLATION

Whisper to me — they called me fool, wild, madman;  
Charlatans they, who mocked in symmetry  
Of heartless ignorance; chaffed in weight of chaff;  
Laughed in their own fool-laughter, whilst I sought  
By every vestige, every living clue,  
To know the truth e'er life had sped away.

Whisper to me — I know thine anguish well;  
Broken, alone and helpless, on and on  
I struggled: on and on, and nowhere. Bonds  
That life had riveted to me clinked, as death  
Scattered the lights of knowledge in the dust:  
Teeth of a dragon ne'er to reawake.

And men will strive as I have striven, ever,  
Die as I died, wasted, mind and limb;

For, fearing we might understand herself,  
Life has turned torturess: given sight enough  
That we must see, as tottering into dark,  
Each individual life; ourselves and all we love.

Move not away, but place thy gentle lips  
On the white stone that marks a ruined end,  
Thus I receive thy blessing, and thou mine:  
Pass on, we shall not meet again, my friend.

## THE TALE OF THE GREY WOLF

### 1

Boldly I spoke, and trembled at the words,  
"For you will tell me ere the night departing  
Steal thee away a dream before the morn.  
Come ope those glistening jaws wherein the fangs  
Give back the livid tincture of the moon!  
Come move that tongue more wont within the race  
To loll and drip, than in the subtleties  
Of speech to spin the intricate to fashion!  
I know thee well, grey wolf: a single sweep  
And this sharp blade will tell if red thy blood  
Or green. Speak! for I tarry not. The way  
Is long, afar the lamp is hung above  
The darkened lintel of the tavern door:  
There shall thy tale be told, and maid and master



Wonder at me for that I feared thee not:  
There shall thy tale be told or else the spit  
Turned by the potboy o'er the roaring blaze,  
Hiss with the last faint quiverings of thy heart."

As first I spoke, quite unafraid he looked  
Not at my lips as men do; but my eyes  
Gauged the intent for him. Then slow he turned  
And on the moon fixed his intensive gaze,  
Long puzzling at its bright placidity.

Slow up he rose, and yawned and stretched his legs,  
Then like the wind fled out among the pines  
Where endless lay the darkened avenues  
Of night; and I was after him alone.

Silent I sped, and swifter than the hound,  
Silent away and truer to the trail,  
Guided by instinct. One by one the trees  
Told out the varied swingings of my sword  
That smote their sturdy sides and rang away.  
Now came the moon perhaps, or now was lost

Where monstrous boughs in monstrous shadows hung,  
Fighting the soul, but yet the heart within  
Beat to the maddening fervor of the hunt  
And I must on behind the fleeing thing.

At last I fell: a heavy, twisted root,  
Sprung from the earth as some loud-thundering wind  
Beat low the noble posture of the trunk,  
Quick held, then flung me headlong to the ground.

A growling rush, a shadow overhead,  
The snap of empty jaws; and then a long  
Low snarl of pain. So had the grey wolf leapt,  
So leapt, then fled like coward where the trail  
Descended.

Trembling I stood and down my face  
The blood streamed copiously; each gasping breath  
Discovered pains new-seated in my bosom:  
Onward I strove, half knowing where I went.

## II

High risen, like the river's ghost to flow  
Where ages past the stronger river went,  
Soft and uncertain in its fashioning  
The moonlight played upon the canyon mist.  
Thrice down the echoing incline I hurled  
The resonant defiance of a hate.

"Who calls?" a woman's voice, and strangely rich  
And clear, "Who calls the grey wolf from the heights?"  
Perhaps the tale, though pledged above the glass,  
Perhaps, though told in partial drunkenness,  
Were true! "Come, stranger, nor in rage descend,  
Nor fear." I felt a sapling quiver now,  
Under my hand: My eyes in dizziness  
Revolved the world about me; moon and stars  
Went swimming down amid the senseless void  
And high above, between the glowering walls  
The river mist went creeping on and on.

Now down the hill I stumbled, breathing slow,  
While heart and brain beat wild in one accord:

"I come," I cried, "Though troubled be the way  
I come, I come; thy voice like silken thread  
Leads me afar through interwoven glades,  
Yet nearer, nearer, downward to thy feet."

Alone she knelt, and o'er a swirling pool,  
Far in mid-river, dipped a goblet low.  
Then I like a fountain from the sylvan sward,  
Enrobed in silk, ensilvered by the moon  
She rose, and saw me, smiling. Through the stream,  
As comes a moonbeam through the night, she came,  
Bearing the goblet high above her head.

Before a rock encroaching on the way,  
A rock of awful massiveness and strength,  
Rising, a dark head in the vast ravine,

We stood. Then of the goblet's potion drank I  
Deeply, and cried to her that stood beside  
To bid and I would do whate'er she willed.  
No task it seemed — as I would lift a hand  
Today and wonder not that it obeyed.

So did I heave the boulder from its sheath  
Of crumbling rock and stubborn mountain brush  
And cast it crashing downward through the night.

“Behold,” she said, and as I turned from harking  
Unto the fall of that which I had thrown,  
A light of gold, in magic soft and low  
Enthralled me.

On the threshold of a cave  
The grey wolf, bristling, bared his fangs and snarled:  
But oh, beyond, a hideous spectre sat,  
A frightful skeleton that lived and grinned  
In mockery of the gold, mosaic walls.

Then stealthily from out a glittering heap,  
Two coins it plucked and held them to the light,  
Clacking its knees and swaying to and fro.  
Aloud I shrieked for there before my eyes  
The coins turned human faces; one that smiled  
And one that wept, in likeness of my own;  
Then back to the table fell they and were coins.

**"This," said the maid, "the grey wolf's secret is;  
And this is God's" — three kisses on my lips,  
Three kisses like the ocean's kiss in May —  
And with the third I swooned into the dawn.**

## THE RETURN

### I

“Why are the whistles booming so,  
Why is the hum of the turbines low?  
Is it land? What land? Where’s France? Where’s France?  
And Joe, my bunkey, where is Joe?  
He would not leave me for the sight  
Of land. I asked for him last night:  
Your face it says you do not know.  
Oh God, it’s true, he’s dead. Dance, dance  
Ye lights and shrapnel, ye that kill  
And put to sleep, nor maim the sense  
As that vile lotus-breath: — Intense  
But sweet, insidious — Yes, I will be still!”

## II

"Who are these people by my bed?  
Yes, I know you — you're mother — dead,  
I thought — oh no, not you, — sometimes  
I think I've jugglers in my head.  
It's Joe that's gone — in a flash of light,  
Lost as a firefly in the night,  
And I've a living death instead.  
Joe, that was luck!

*Your* face, and chimes,  
And orange blossoms! till it seems  
You are the bride I knew, my Ruth,  
I wish to call this vision truth;  
Oh, say I'm dreaming life, not living dreams!"



### III

"Each night, my love, you prayed and wept,  
Each night caressed me as I slept,  
And stole back to your single bed,  
While I waxed stronger, grew adept  
At linking thoughts together late  
Into darkness — but you could not wait —  
Last night in the joy of strength I crept  
To your room — and saw — and would have fled  
But for the flame in my veins. I fell,  
Like the wreck I was, in the sombre hall,  
You found me when you heard the fall.  
The dead return to life to find earth hell!"

#### IV

"I speed to France from whence I came.  
A girl of the wheat fields to my name  
Alone, if I should not return,  
Swore an eternal truth — the same  
Your false lips whispered a year ago.  
Oh yes, in health and strength and flow  
Of wealth and friends you wish the blame  
To rest on me — Why do they burn,  
Those crimson cheeks? Why do your eyes  
Fear looking into mine, the true?  
The love I had was all for you,  
Take his love now who perjured paradise."

## THE MOON ON THE PALISADES

### I

I follow the moon to the Palisades  
Where the dead brush blows on the rocky walls,  
And streams are frozen in white cascades  
And torrents steal to the silent falls  
Like Ghosts, on the Palisades.

### II

I follow the moon to the Palisades  
For the call of my heart is to be alone.  
The forest merges to darkness and fades  
In the shadows hiding the steepes of stone  
From the moon, on the Palisades.

### III

I follow the moon to the Palisades  
To merge myself and my secret so,  
Till the morning comes and the dark evades  
The cliff to hide in the caves below  
At dawn, on the Palisades.

### IV

I follow the moon to the Palisades  
Where solitude whispers that Death is free  
From pain; that a fantasy soul degrades  
The living to sense servility.  
There is peace on the Palisades.

### V

I follow the moon to the Palisades  
And a spirit rises over the waste  
As battle-smoke over the gleaming blades  
And I know that the spirit of death is chaste  
As the moon on the Palisades.

## SONG OF A SUICIDE

Last golden eve I watched a quivering star  
Fall the long firmament to the hush of space,  
Last eve I rose against the giant face  
Of night and cried my sorrowing afar.

Last golden eve I knelt upon the strand,  
I tasted of the brine and laughed and wept.  
I felt the pulse of Time and thought it slept  
And held it close and found it was the sand.

Last golden eve my memories of thee  
Like startled bird into the dark I flung  
And watched them flutter where the moonbeams hung:  
Last golden eve I stumbled in the sea

## THE WEEPER

He who so stood beneath the willow's shade,  
Thigh-deep in the river, and with brimming eyes  
Noted the constant coursing of the tide  
That flowed, now swift, now slow, yet ever flowed;  
There seeing the hidden truth, life's parallel,  
Time changeth all, the river never is  
The selfsame river — yet no more he saw —  
Found consolation in a woman's arms;  
Drowned his poor sorrow in a vinous glow.

Oh now, long years forgotten, he is gone,  
And others dwell as he dwelt, through the land,  
The crystal waters sweep the same bright banks,  
The wind-song in the willows still is young.  
Life though it changeth must forever be

The same — Life unto death, yet ere it dies  
New life bursts forth from out the strength of youth —  
As long as sun and earth shall sway as now  
Death cannot conquer — change is only change.

Oh fool, why must thou ever seek divinity beyond,  
Knowing each life must yield, then yield itself at last,  
And, fearing, blind thyself unto the truth of all:  
Thine immortality takes birth with every child?

## AT DUSK

I fear the soft glow of the evening lamps  
And the imperceptible passing of things  
From truth of vision to shadow being,  
The sycophant presence of him that clings  
To the coming of darkness in sable wings.  
I fear the remorseless terror that stamps  
The pallor death to the brow of seeing,  
That leaves the clay in its strange desire  
Hearts of jet in souls of fire.

Out of the even the mists of light  
Flung in a suppliant moon-appeal  
Stream to exhaustion in void of ebon,  
Sanctioning gifts of the dust that steal  
Eternal being from earthen seal.



And bodies fall from the spirit's flight  
For spiderous silence to fashion a web on.  
Torn from the earth and the surge of the main  
We sink to the bosom of earth again.

## EVENING

I will not know, for yet I think thee near  
In this last silence: o'er my brow thy hand  
Steals like a summer wind; the chaliced ear  
Holds whisperings from a ne'er forgotten land.  
How dark my soul, and like an endless wood  
That knows no light upon its shadowy face  
Save when the moon comes with her silver flood  
To sweep foreboding terror from the place.  
I feel thy lily breath upon my hair,  
I struggle up, I raise my lips to bless  
Thy presence, but the void, unhallowed air  
Cries down upon me in my loneliness:  
Then with a fluttering heart and with the fright  
Of death, I ope mine eyes and gaze into the night!

## THE END OF THE TRAIL

Hand upon brow, and in fearlessness  
Scanning the heavens,  
Conscious and proud of the youth of him,  
Tall and stately and handsome,  
Bares he to sunset the sacred strength of his bosom;  
Prays in the hopefulness of a day of grace  
To the Great Spirit.

Soft as the purr of the puma,  
Deep in the heart of the valley,  
Murmurs the bowstring.

Slender and swift,  
Like to the hiss of the adder  
Whispers the arrow.

the crest is, alone; and the darkness  
the abysses  
her keep mantle, relentless.  
ut Thy hand o'er a brow  
er than death, where it rests on the rocks of the canyon  
eth unseen the last of a noble race:  
*, the Great Spirit!*

## THE STORY OF THE JUDGE

'Tis bosomed deep in utmost secrecy,  
Fearful of nothing, for the seal is death:  
And I can laugh the whole world in the face,  
Humor its sorrows or cajole its cares,  
A favored child. Mayhap its brimming fold  
Will give a yearling for new sacrifice,  
Life for a life: most carefully will the noose  
Be played until some lamb, unwary, feed  
Within the precinct of the evidence  
And all is silent.

Now the joyful blood  
Careers through my veins in orgiastic life!  
The dark clouds of remorse are trembling now  
Before the strength of this wild, wind-swept heaven  
And unlulled breezes singing of success.

I am no more a man, but tempered high,  
Sprung to an element through a blessed act;  
Sacred my path shall be o'er all the earth,  
Man must acknowledge me as strong of will,  
As pure of heart, and scatter roses low,  
Bowing to me, for I am innocent:  
Crime undiscovered is a guiltless crime!

What ails thee, world? Though I be obdurate  
Yet am I not a fool. Thy pity knows  
The living, — cowering yonder, — but as judge  
I see a countenance unredeemable.  
Hush thy rude voices! Though 'twas done unseen,  
No man becomes a sinner till he sins,  
And then is more the sinner for his past.  
A wondrous chance has thrown into our hands  
The chain that links the doer with the deed,  
Each pulse that stirs within a murderer's heart  
Is venom bubbling through the well of life:  
Death is the sentence!

Now the court is still,  
Freed the long session of its loud unrest:  
Quiet, quiet speaks of the coming night.  
Yet would I hold thee, day, as love unfaithful,  
Knowing thy long departure, slow return,  
Yet read from thine eyes that all regret is vain;  
Oh stay with me, I fear the dark, oh stay!  
For with her own white fingers have I torn  
The lily breast of Truth: Oh stay with me!

The risen moon is like a thread of gold,  
Virgin, as thou wert, and as soon to pass;  
Dim in its bending cup thy face is dreaming,  
Closed are thine eyes, and o'er a pallid brow  
The languid moonbeams wave thy molten hair.

Speak to me, speak! Oh God, am I so low?  
So low! What cares the universe for me,  
A maddened fool who in the way of dreams  
Governed the living in the force of law,  
Masking his hideous self unwittingly!

A poison draught to end a poisoned life,  
And then I climb that vast stairway beyond,  
Upward and upward to eternity:  
Over the shadowy steps thy light will come,  
Whispering endless time, unbroken faith.

Sail on forever till the night shall hide thee,  
Fled from a world whose cares are not thine own,  
Dream into darkness till the star beside thee  
Mourn his lost lover, in the sky alone!



## MY FAITH

I hear no call of bird, no drone of bee,  
I hear no murmur of the hastening stream,  
This is a barren waste that was the sea,  
Things that have been live now but in a dream.

Long shadows hover in the dim midday,  
Spectres that leer at noon's low-flaming sun,  
Motionless sentinels of the dark that say,  
"Thy reign is o'er nor ours is yet begun."

What is this life so given, so returned,  
What is this soul so free to rise and soar,  
That when the flickering, paltry flame be burned  
Dies into vastness and is known no more?

Forever the dawn may come, the cold of death  
Stills not my heart. Throughout the wandering sphere  
Life cannot be destroyed: a sun's last breath  
Means but the winter of a faltering year.

What is must always be, the past yet live,  
For Time is but the measurement of today,  
Dies not the tree that swift its leaves must give,  
Spring blows reborn what autumn sweeps away.

False rest, I know thee now; life ever takes  
From out the night the soul that would be free,  
Thou'rt but a sleep that morning re-awakes:  
Almighty GOD, there is no Death but Thee.

## AS I PRAY

Two little drops of poison on the velvet throne  
That glisten in the dark lamp's ghostliness,  
Two little drops that fluttered from thy cup;  
And didst thou tremble so  
Or was it pain that far thy lips below  
Flung out the glass all shattered and alone.  
Wouldn't thou in death confess?  
Lies in thy palm half lifted up  
No plaintive line of sorrowing for me  
To still the burn of infidelity,  
Or are these drops to eyes of demon grown?

## THE PESTILENCE

I have come in the dark, I have come in the day,  
I have come in the dusk and the dawn,  
I have won the mad race with the ships on the sea,  
And none shall escape me and none shall be free,  
The pleading of age nor the boasting of youth,  
Nor the power of wisdom and brawn.

No question is asked and no answer desired,  
If bidden to enter and ride  
Why the past is a fancy and only a gleam  
Through the rust of a sword that is swung in a dream,  
You speed a swift honeymoon out of the world  
And you travel with death as a bride.

Oh, hate and aggression and falsehood and scorn  
Are crushed by the wheels as I go,

For the fear of the scourge that I hold in my hand,  
The terror that knows the resistless command  
Makes *living* the only distinction of life  
From the rest that lies dead in the snow.

## IN A GLASS OF RED WINE

Droop low thine arms that hover o'er me now,  
In subtle, easy curve, like temple arch  
Mosaic hung and soft in the sunset spell.  
Bend down thy perfumed head, on lips that parch  
For a breath of unselfish love, and on my brow  
Rest thine, dark maid, nor heed the mosque-hour bell.

Far north the paramour white winter lies,  
As false as one I loved. Luxuriate  
The rising sun flings diamonds to the snow,  
And she dwells in that land; yet passing the gate  
To our home some friend may turn away his eyes  
Where footsteps enter though they do not go.

So fold me closer, hold me nearer, steal  
With thy great, limpid eyes forgotten flame

From mine, let blind devotion call to those  
Who see naught else and bow till they be lame  
Let Allah speak what breast and bosom feel  
And limb on limb, and lips that meet and close.

**THE END**















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